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United for Quality Care

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Indria Mitto, Inpatient Psychology
Unit Nurse, Osbourne Correctional
District 1199 New England
Before the Appropriations Committee

Good Evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Committee, my name is Indria Mitto. I work at Osborn Correctional Institution, and I am an 1199 Delegate. Last year, I testified in front of you as a discharge planner. I'm currently working on the inpatient psychology unit.

I'm here to ask you to fund more mental health staff positions, and to fund mental health reentry programs. We need more staff to assist all who need our care. We also need space at facilities to provide privacy for individual meetings. We must produce a system that holistically addresses the plans that will assist all mentally ill individuals.

I am encouraged by existing collaborations between DOC and those providing mental health services once inmates are released.

I recently had a case where the inmate was on the spectrum. He was not mentally capable of taking care of himself, but not mentally ill enough to enter a hospital. Before his release, one of the officers and I convinced him to get assessed by Assessment Pro. He was released from prison with no placement. He served his time, and we could no longer hold him. Shortly after his release, he was placed in an inpatient unit because of statements that he made. Having Assessment Pro allowed him mental health coverage. He called to thank me for our help.

There's much more needed to be done. Our facilities are short staffed. Our mental health staff does not currently have adequate office space to provide quality care.

Because of the huge barriers that communities of color face in terms of employment, housing, healthcare, and education; people leaving prison often lack the support systems necessary to find jobs, healthcare, housing, and schools.

We need the programs, the people to follow them, the people to encourage them- both inside correctional facilities, and in communities upon release. Thank you for your time.